



# THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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## THE LIBERTY BOYS AS SLEUTH-HOUNDS; OR, TRAILING BENEDICT ARNOLD.

BY HARRY MOORE.



Dick stood on a table and peered through the opening above the door, while the other three youths kept watch out of the window and guard over the prisoners.



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## CHAPTER I.

### THE TRAITOR.

A little after noon of the 25th of September, of the year 1780, Bob Estabrook, a member of the famous company of "Liberty Boys," rushed into the quarters occupied by said "Liberty Boys," at West Point, on the Hudson, in a state of great excitement.

"Dick! Dick!" he cried.

"What is it, Bob?" asked a handsome youth of perhaps twenty years, turning a surprised and questioning face toward Bob. The youth in question was Dick Slater, the captain of the company, and one of the most famous young men in the patriot army. He had done a great deal of scout and spy work, and had earned the name of "The Champion Spy of the Revolution."

"Arnold is a traitor!" was Bob's reply.

"What's that you say?"

Dick Slater was on his feet in an instant, and the next moment Bob was surrounded by a score or more of the "Liberty Boys," asking him what he meant.

"I say Arnold is a traitor!" repeated Bob.

"A traitor?"

"Arnold?"

"The hero of Saratoga and Quebec?—never!"

"It can't be!"

"There must be some mistake!"

"Who told you, Bob?"

Such were a few of the many exclamations. The "Liberty Boys" all knew Arnold well, and had always admired him for his dashing bravery, and they could not think that he was a traitor.

In answer to the question of who told him that Arnold was a traitor, Bob replied: "I helped row General Washington across the river a little while ago, you know, and we waited while he went up to Beverly Robinson's house. After a while one of the officers came down to the boat to tell us that the commander-in-chief would be there in a short time, as he was coming back over to West Point,

and then he told us that Arnold was a traitor, and that he had fled for his life."

"That is too bad!" said Dick, sorrowfully; "it is terrible! I would never have believed that Arnold would be so base and lost to all sense of honor. How did his wife take it, Bob? Did you hear?"

"The officers said that she was in hysterics."

"I don't doubt it. Poor woman! It will be worse for her than for Arnold."

"Yes, indeed."

"I wonder if it would be possible to capture Arnold?" Dick remarked, musingly.

"Hardly, Dick. It is said that he is now safe on board the British sloop of war, Vulture, which was lying down the river, waiting to take the British officer, Andre, back to New York."

"The British officer, Andre?"

"Yes—oh, you didn't know about that, either, did you? It was the capture of this British officer, down near Tarrytown, that made Arnold's treason known."

"How was that?"

"He had papers in Arnold's handwriting in his shoes—and a pass to carry him through the lines, from Arnold."

"What were the papers?"

"Drawings of the works here at West Point, and everything of that kind that would assist the British in capturing the fortress."

"That is terrible, and makes Arnold's guilt absolutely certain," said Dick.

"Yes; and his flight, too, clinches all."

"So it does. And what about the commander-in-chief—did he come back over to the fort?"

"Yes; he is here, now, making a careful examination to see what Arnold had done that would make the capture of the place easy."

"That is something very necessary," said Dick; "the probability is that a force is making its way up the river now, for the purpose of making an attack on us."

"That is what the commander-in-chief fears. I heard him tell Lafayette so."



"Well, the chances are that we will have a battle soon."

"It is likely."

"Still," said Dick, after a pause, "I am not so sure of it. If Andre was captured with the drawings and papers on his person he did not, of course, succeed in carrying them to the British in New York, and I hardly think that the British would start up the river before he returned. He was undoubtedly their messenger, sent to confer with Arnold, and they would await his return before making any decided move."

"That is true," agreed Bob.

The "Liberty Boys" fell to discussing the startling affair and were so engaged when an orderly appeared and addressed Dick Slater.

"The commander-in-chief wishes to see you at headquarters," he said.

"I will go at once," said Dick.

"That means work for you, Dick," said Bob.

"I shouldn't wonder, Bob."

"Say, if it has anything to do with Arnold, and you can do so, get the commander-in-chief to let me take a hand in it, too, Dick," half pleaded Bob.

"I'll see about it, Bob."

Dick left the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys" and made his way to headquarters. He found Generals Washington, Lafayette, Greene and Knox there. They were looking very sober, indeed.

They greeted Dick pleasantly, for all knew the youth and thought the world of him. Then the commander-in-chief spoke.

"Dick," he said, sadly, "Arnold has proven to be a traitor; he plotted to give up West Point to the British, and on the plot being discovered he fled."

"I have just heard that such was the case, your excellency," replied Dick.

"Arnold fled down the river in a boat, and is now on board the British sloop of war, Vulture."

"Yes?"

"The sloop is now headed down the river, and the traitor will soon be in New York, apparently safe among his new friends."

"Yes?"

"I said 'apparently' safe, Dick," said the commander-in-chief, looking at Dick earnestly.

Dick bowed. "I took note of what you said, your excellency," he replied.

"Good! And, now, do you think, Dick, that it would be possible to capture Arnold and get him out of New York from among the British?"

Dick did not reply immediately. He was pondering the question. At last he said: "I hardly know what reply to make to your question, sir. Under ordinary circumstances I would not be afraid to say that I thought it possible to capture some one and bring him away; but, you see, this some one is Arnold, the greatest traitor ever known, and, no doubt, extraordinary precautions will be taken to watch over him and take care of him."

The four generals nodded. "You are undoubtedly right about that, my boy," Washington said; "it would certainly be a very difficult matter to capture Arnold and bring him away, but if it can possibly be done I want it to be done. I intend to try in every possible way to get hold of the traitor, for I would like to make an example of him that would be a lesson to all who may have a leaning toward treason, and that would be an object lesson to the world for all time;" and the commander-in-chief's face grew stern.

"Then," said Dick, "am I to understand that you wish me to undertake this affair, your excellency?"

The commander-in-chief bowed. "Yes, Dick," he replied; "I wish you to undertake that branch of it. I am going to enter into negotiations with General Howe, and will get the traitor back, if I possibly can; but at the same time, fearing that I will fail, I wish to have other agencies at work; and that of trying to capture him and bring him back by force is the one I have the most hope from. I wish you to look after it, Dick."

"I shall be only too glad to do so, your excellency."

"I was sure you would be."

"Yes, indeed. Have you any special instructions to give regarding how I shall go to work?"

"No; I shall leave that to your own discretion and judgment. Go ahead and do the work in your own way, Dick."

"Very well; I will do so, sir. I suppose you wish me to enter upon the work at once?"

"Immediately."

"Very well. There is nothing further you wish to say to me or instructions you wish to give me?"

"I have no instructions to give, and nothing further to say, Dick. Arnold is a traitor; he is in New York among the British; I want him brought back, if it can possibly be accomplished. That is all."

"Very well." Then Dick saluted and withdrew.

"He will do the work, if anybody can, your excellency," said General Greene, when Dick had gone.

"Yes, indeed, General Greene; but I fear it is beyond



the power of even Dick Slater to capture Arnold and bring him away from British headquarters, as it were."

"It is a big task, certainly," agreed General Lafayette.

"But he has accomplished almost as difficult tasks in the past," said General Knox.

"So he has; and that is the reason I send him upon this one," said Washington.

"If he can't do it it would be useless for any one else to try," said Greene.

The above-given conversation shows in what esteem Dick Slater was held by the four great generals of the Revolution. They had great confidence in the brave captain of the company of "Liberty Boys."

Dick hastened back to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys," and was greeted with queries from every side.

"What did the commander-in-chief want?"

"What is up, Dick?"

"Was it anything about Arnold?"

"Tell us all about it, old man!"

Such were a few of the exclamations. Finally Dick held up his hand for silence, and laughingly said: "If you'll give me a chance I'll tell you all about it."

"Go ahead!"

"We'll give you the chance!"

"Yes, yes!"

"Shut up, everybody, and let Dick talk!"

"I'll tell you what the commander-in-chief wanted with me," said Dick: "He wanted that we should make the attempt to trace Arnold and capture him and bring him back."

"Ah, ha! he wants us to act as sleuth-hounds, eh, Dick?" exclaimed Bob.

"Well, yes, I suppose you might call it that, Bob. He wants us to trace Arnold to his hiding place in the city and then, if possible, to capture him and bring him back."

"That will be no easy job, Dick."

"Certainly not."

"It will give us some lively work, though," went on Bob, and that is what I like."

Dick smiled. "There is no doubt but that it will be lively enough, Bob."

"Likely it will be too lively," smiled Mark Morrison.

"That's right," from Sam Sanderson; "Arnold is in New York, isn't he?"

"He is on his way there; he will be there before long," said Dick.

"Well, when he gets there he will be in the midst of thousands of redcoats; that being the case, I don't see how we are to capture him and bring him away."

"Oh, it'll be a difficult matter," said Bob; "but it will be work that is worth while."

"Yes," said Dick; "if we can go down into New York City, trace Arnold down, capture him and bring him away, it will be the biggest kind of a feather in our cap."

"Yes, it'll be a whole bunch of feathers!" grinned Bob.

"And you are going to make the attempt, Dick?" asked Sam Sanderson.

"Indeed I am, Sam!"

"When?"

"Right away."

"How are you going to go about it?"

"Well, I will have to give that matter a few minutes' thought. I haven't had time to devise a plan as yet."

"Well, if you want to keep on living you don't want to devise a plan that leaves me out of the affair!" said Bob, with an air of mock fierceness.

"Oh, you shall be in it, Bob. I will have to have two or three of you to help me, at any rate."

"Not more than that?" remarked one of the youths, with a disappointed look. It was evident that he wished to make one of the party and was afraid he would not get to do so. There was a disappointed look on the face of nearly all the youths also.

Dick Slater sat down and was silent, thinking, for fifteen minutes, and then he looked up and said: "Bob, Mark and Sam, get ready to accompany me. I shall take you three and no more."

## CHAPTER II.

### "THE LIBERTY BOYS AS SLEUTH-HOUNDS."

Of course, Bob, Mark and Sam were delighted on account of having been selected to accompany Dick, but the rest were disconsolate.

"Can't you take more of us, Dick?" asked one.

"You may need more than four," from another.

"You'll need the whole company, and more, too, if you are going to venture down into that hornet's nest," said still another, but Dick only shook his head and smiled.

"I am sorry, boys," he said; "I wish I could take you all, for I know you would like to go; but in a case of this kind, the fewer I have with me the better, as we will be less likely to attract attention. Of course, I will need some assistance, but I think three comrades will be sufficient, and all that it will be wise for me to take."

"Well, you know best, Dick," was the reply.



The four youths busied themselves getting ready for the adventure. They were going to venture right into the midst of the redecoats, so it would not do to wear their uniforms, and they doffed the continental blue and donned rough, ragged suits such as were worn by the farmer youths of the vicinity. This would disguise them and make it much safer for them both on the road to New York and after they got there.

It did not take long to make their arrangements, and then they bade their comrades good-by and took their departure. They crossed the river to Beverly Robinson's house and there procured four farm horses on which to make the journey to the city. The youths had good horses over at the fort, but they did not wish to run the risk of losing them.

It was now well along toward the middle of the afternoon, but as it was September it would be light till after six, and the youths could ride quite a distance before they would have to think of stopping for the night. Indeed, Dick was thinking of riding pretty much all night. Still, as they would not dare enter New York in the daytime, this would not gain them much. They would have to put up somewhere all day and wait for nightfall before entering the city; so it would perhaps be as well to put up for the night and ride all next day. By so doing there would not be any danger of losing their way, which they might do at night, if it were very dark.

Dick thought the matter over carefully, and decided to be guided somewhat by circumstances. If it should transpire that they found a good place to spend the night, where they would be among friends, they would stop; but if they did not find any such place they would continue onward till midnight, at least, and then go into camp at some convenient spot. This they could do, as they each had a blanket, and in their saddle-bags was food enough to do them.

"We'll have to keep our eyes open, Dick," remarked Bob when they had been riding an hour or so; "we may run across a gang of Cowboys, you know."

"Yes; or Skinners, Bob. It doesn't matter which we encounter; one sort is as likely to try to rob us as another."

"That's right," said Sam Sanderson; "although the Skinners pretend to be patriots, and the Cowboys pose as Tories, they are really more robbers than anything else, and will rob patriot or loyalist with equal impartiality."

"Yes, you are right about that, Sam. I would as soon encounter Cowboys as Skinners."

"Well, we haven't much that would tempt them," said Mark Morrison, "so I guess they won't bother us."

"They might try to take our weapons," said Dick.

"Well, they will get nothing but the contents of mine!" said Bob, grimly. "You can wager that no Cowbobs or Skinners are going to take my weapons away from me until after they are empty!"

The other three expressed themselves in much the same terms, and thus conversing they rode onward at as rapid a gait as it was possible to get out of the horses. They continued onward till sundown, and then not having seen a farmhouse for quite a while, and not knowing how long it would be before they would come upon one they decided to stop and eat supper and let their horses rest and crop the grass.

They came to a stop at a little stream, and after watering the horses, tethered them, and, getting the food out of the saddle-bags, proceeded to eat their frugal meal.

While thus engaged two men came riding along the road coming from the same direction the youths had come from. The strangers were rough-looking customers and were mounted on scrawny, half-starved horses. They looked at the four youths rather searchingly and curiously as they drew opposite, and, after hesitating, came to a stop.

"Hullo, ye fellers!" said one, in a gruff voice.

"How are you, gentlemen?" remarked Dick, quietly.

"Gentlemen? Oh, Dick!" said Bob, in an undertone with a grin.

"Mought I ax who ye fellers air?" was the next remark of the stranger who had taken the office of spokesman upon himself.

"Certainly you might," replied Dick; "there is no law against your asking, that I know of."

"Waal, then, who air ye?"

"We are travelers."

Bob snickered.

"Oh, ye're travelers, air ye?" the man said, sullenly for he saw and heard Bob snicker, and it aroused his ire.

"Yes."

"But I didn' mean thet; I meant, who air ye—whut yer names?"

"Oh, that's it?"

"Yas."

"And I suppose you would like to know where we are going, what our business is when we get there, and about it?"

Dick spoke calmly and with a perfectly sober face, but Bob, who was a youth of a lively and fun-loving temperament, could not help laughing aloud. The two men could see nothing funny in Dick's remark, however, and they frowned and looked savage.



"I s'pose by thet ye mean thet it hain't none uv our bizness who ye air?" the one who had done the talking said, angrily.

"Oh, well, I would not like to say anything impolite," said Dick, soberly, and Bob came very near exploding with laughter.

This made the two angrier than ever, and the spokesman shook his fist and then, indicating Bob by pointing, cried: "Ye think et's funny, don' ye, ye blamed leetle monkey, ye! Ef ye'll jes' cum out heer an' stan' up before me er minute, I think I'll be able ter change thet larf ter ther other corner uv yer mouth!"

Bob was on his feet in an instant. He strode straight out till within ten feet of the man, and then, pausing, said, with a grimness quite at variance with his former mood: "Just get down off that horse, you big loafer, and I'll teach you a lesson in just one minute that you will remember all your life!"

"Whut's thet! D'ye dar' ter call me er loafer?" the fellow cried, growing almost black in the face with rage.

"I have no doubt that you are worse than a loafer!" replied Bob, cuttingly; "anyway, I know you are a fellow who needs a lesson in manners, and I am just the boy who can give it to you. Get down off your horse!"

But the man did not evince any very great desire to do so. It was plain that he was not eager for an encounter with the handsome, bold-speaking youth, and his talk had been intended more as a bluff than otherwise. He saw, now, that he had caught a Tartar, and turned his attention toward getting out of the scrape in which he feared he had gotten himself.

"Ef ye think I'm goin' ter git down theer an' have two or three uv ye fellers jump onter me, ye're fooled, thet's all!" he said, sullenly, but in a tone of relief, for he thought this excuse well thought of.

"You need fear nothing of the kind," said Bob, quickly; "no one will assist me a particle. Indeed, I won't need any assistance, and I guess you know that, and that is the reason you change your tune so quickly."

"No, I don' know ennythin' uv ther kin'; but I do know thet young fellers like ye air allus reddy ter jump in an' he'p wun another, and I'd be er fool ter git down an' give ye ther chance at me."

"It is just as I thought," said Bob, scornfully; "you are a great, big blowhard!"

"Ye think so, do ye?" the man asked, in a peculiar, threatening voice.

"I do. Indeed, I'm sure of it!"

"All right; ye're welcum ter yer beleef—but I think

I'll be able ter prove ter ye thet yer mistook, afore yer menny days older."

"Still determined to keep on blowing, aren't you?" laughed Bob.

"Ye'll fin' out whether er not I'm blowin'!"

"Shut up, or I'll pull you off your horse and give you one of the worst thrashings you ever had in your life!"

Bob made a movement toward the man as he spoke, and with a startled exclamation the fellow dug his heels into the horse's ribs and got away from there in a hurry, his companion following suit.

"You're a brave one, you are!" called out Bob, sarcastically.

The two did not reply, but slackened the speed of their horses at a bend a hundred yards distant, and half turning in their saddles, shook their fists at Bob and his three comrades.

"Oh, go on about your business, or I'll get on my horse and chase you into the tall timber and up a tree!" called out Bob.

The men made no reply in words, but they urged their horses to increased speed and quickly disappeared.

"That was a pretty pair, I must say!" said Bob, as he went back and took his seat by his companions.

"An ugly pair, I would call them," said Mark Morrison.

"You're right," agreed Sam Sanderson.

"And, if I mistake not, a pair that is likely to try to make us trouble," said Dick.

"They would if they could, there is no doubt about that," said Bob; "but what could two such miserable specimens as they do against the four of us, any one of whom is a match for both?"

"There may be more of them not far away, Bob," said Dick.

"That's so; I never thought of that."

"They looked like Cowboys," said Sam.

"Or Skinners—who are just as bad!" from Mark.

"Well, we won't let them skin us—not by a long shot!" said Bob, grimly.

"We'll have to keep our eyes open," said Dick, soberly; "they are likely to hide in the timber at the side of the road and shoot us down as we come along."

"They would be afraid," dissented Bob; "they would know that if they failed to kill all of us before we could get at them, they themselves would lose their lives."

"As I said, though, Bob, they may have comrades near at hand."

"Well, in that case, they might attempt something."

The youths finished their supper and then waited half an



hour to give the horses a good rest, after which they mounted and again pursued their journey.

It was now quite dark and it was seen that it was likely to be a bad night. Clouds were looming up in the west and occasional fitful flashes of lightning proclaimed the fact that a thunder storm was likely to break in the course of an hour or two.

"What had we better do, boys?" asked Dick.

"Just whatever you think best, Dick," replied Bob; "you are the boss of this expedition."

"Well, it is so dark, even now, that we are liable to lose our way; and after the clouds get clear over it will be worse. And it is my opinion that we had better hunt up shelter and stop for the night."

"That will suit me, Dick."

"And me."

"It's the same with me."

"All right, then; that settles it. The thing now is to find a sheltered place to go into camp."

The youths rode onward and soon the faint rumble of the thunder could be heard in the distance.

"It will be raining within the hour," said Dick.

"And lightning and thundering to beat anything," added Sam, who was nervous in thunder storms.

"We may be able to find shelter in less time than that," said Dick, hopefully.

"We may come to the home of a farmer soon," from Bob.

They rode onward for fifteen or twenty minutes, and then suddenly, as a flash of lightning illumined the scene for an instant, an exclamation escaped Dick.

"There is a house!" he cried. "Now we will be all right."

All four had seen the building at the same instant, and Bob said: "Doesn't look as if anybody is at home, Dick. There is no light."

"True; well, it doesn't matter. We'll stop overnight, anyway."

"That's right."

When they were, as they judged, even with the house the youths paused and waited for another flash of lightning so as to get a view of their surroundings.

The flash was not long delayed, and then it was seen that they were in front of an old, dilapidated house which had a deserted appearance.

"Nobody lives there," said Dick; "and, judging by appearances, nobody has lived there for some time."

"We'll take possession, then," said Bob.

The youths dismounted and led their horses around to the rear of the building. Here, to their great pleasure, they found a good-sized shed which would afford a good shelter for their horses. They unbridled and unsaddled the animals and tied them securely by ropes, after which they entered the deserted farmhouse, taking the saddles and bridles in with them.

"I wish we had a light," said Bob. "We don't know what kind of trouble we may get into in here. There may be snakes in the room, or ghosts, or——"

"We'll get a very good look at the interior when there comes a flash of lightning," said Dick.

Just then there came a flash of lightning and the youths saw a sight which, to say the least, startled them. At the farther end of the room stood six roughly dressed, fierce-looking men, and in their hands were pistols, which they held extended in a manner which threatened the "Liberty Boys"!

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE SURPRISE IN THE OLD CABIN.

"Hello!" exclaimed Dick. "Who are you fellows, and what do you mean by threatening us with pistols?"

"Who air ye fellers?" was the counter-query.

"We are travelers who have stopped in here for shelter from the storm."

"Waal, thet's whut we air, too."

"Very well; put up your pistols. There is no need of our fighting one another."

"How do we know ye hain't er ban' uv robbers?"

"Well, for that matter, how do we know you are not a band of robbers?"

"I dunno."

"Neither do I. It seems to me that it is about an even thing."

Just then there came another flash of lightning, and it was seen that Dick and his three comrades had their pistols out and leveled.

"Say, don' ye fellers shoot them pistils off!" growled one of the men. "Ef ye do, we'll kill ther las' wun uv ye!"

"We won't do so unless you make it necessary," was Dick's calm reply.



"Waal, we hain't ergoin' ter make et necessary."

"I'm glad to hear that."

"Put up yer pistils."

"We will do so, if you will."

"All right; we come in heer ter git outer ther storm, ther same ez ye hev, an' theer hain't no use fur us ter fight."

"Of course not. Put up your pistols."

"All right."

The next flash of lightning showed that both parties had put their pistols away, and the situation did not seem quite so threatening. Still, Dick realized that the six men were not just the kind he would have chosen for companions for the night, and he made up his mind it would not do to go to sleep and risk what they might do.

One thing, Dick had taken as good a look as was possible at the faces of the strangers, and he knew that the two whom they had seen while eating their supper were not in the party.

"I am glad of it," he said to himself; "these men being utter strangers they may not attempt to harm us and we may get through the night without an encounter with them, while if the two were among them they would not be satisfied till they had made an attack upon us."

The fellows seemed to want to talk, for presently one said: "Et's er bad night out."

"Yes, indeed; a bad night," replied Dick.

"Sounds and acts like et wuz goin' ter be bad all night."

"Yes; it wouldn't surprise me if it stormed throughout the entire night."

"Waal, we kin stan' et, I guess, in heer outer ther wet."

"Yes; it can rain all it wants to."

"Jes' so ther lightnin' don' strike ther shanty."

"True; that wouldn't be pleasant."

"Not er bit uv et!"

This did not call for an answer, so Dick said nothing in reply. He did not care about carrying on a conversation, anyway. The fellow was not satisfied, however, and presently he said:

"Thet wuz turrible erbout thet feller Arnold, wuzn't et?"

This was treading on dangerous ground. The six men might be patriots, or Skinners who leaned that way; and then, again, they might be loyalists, or Cowboys with loyalist leanings, and it would not be a good plan to let them know too much; so Dick said, with an assumption of ignorance: "About who, did you say?"

"Arnold."

"Who is he?"

"Don' ye know who Benedick Arnold is?"

"No."

"Waal, thet's funny. Whur ye frum, ennyway, thet ye don' know who Arnold is? He wuz er patriot gineral, in command uv ther post at West Point, an' he wuz plannin' ter giv' ther place over ter ther British, et seems, but wuz caught in et an' he had ter git in er hurry, this mornin'."

"Indeed?" remarked Dick. "And have they caught him?"

"No; an' I guess they won't."

"Why not?"

"He got erway by goin' down ther river in er boat, an' he reached an' boarded ther British vessel, ther Vulture, an' is in New York long afore this."

"Indeed? I suppose they will try to get hold of him, won't they?"

"Who?"

"The patriots?"

There was a hoarse laugh at this. "Mighty leetle good et'd do 'em!"

"Why so?"

"W'y so?"

"Yes."

"Waal, et seems ter me ennybuddy orter know thet. He's down theer in New York ermong hundreds an' thousan's uv ther British, an' how c'u'd ther patriots git 'im?"

"It does seem as if it would be a difficult matter."

"Difficult? W'y, et'd be jes' onposserble!"

"It does seem as if such would be the case."

"Uv course."

"I suppose it would have gone hard with Arnold if the patriots had succeeded in catching him?"

"Gone hard with 'im? Waal, I sh'd say so!"

"What would they have done to him?"

"Hung 'im ter ther handiest tree!"

"I judge you are right."

"Yas, I know I am; but ef they didn' ketch Arnold, they got sumbuddy ez good."

"Indeed?"

"Yas."

"Who have they got?"

"Er British orsifer."

"A British officer?"

"Yas; ther wun thet cum up ter make ther arrangements with Arnold."

"So he was caught, eh?"

"Yas."

"What is his name?"

"Andry, I think, er sumthin' like thet."

"Where was he captured?"



"Clus ter Tarrytown."

"What will they do with him?"

"I dunno; hang 'im, I 'xpect."

"That will make up to the patriots for failing to get Arnold, in some degree at least, won't it?"

"Yas, et'll make 'em feel er leetle better, I 'xpect; but I don't think he deserves hangin' ez much ez Arnold does, do ye?"

"Well, I don't know much about such things," said Dick, cautiously; "I would not like to say one way or the other."

"Waal, thet's ther way et seems ter me. Arnold is ther traitor, an' et seems worse fur 'im ter plan ter giv' up ther patriot force an' works ter ther British than fur them ter plan ter try ter git ther force an' works."

"Perhaps so," said Dick; "I wouldn't like to say."

If the man was trying to draw Dick out and find out which way they leaned, he was disappointed. His next remark seemed to give color to this, for he said:

"Seems ter me yer purty keerful whut ye sez, young feller."

"Well, that is a good plan, don't you think?"

"Oh, I dunno."

"Well, it seems so to me, at any rate."

The rain was coming down in torrents, now, and made so much noise rattling on the clapboard roof that it was impossible to carry on a conversation without shouting, and the man subsided, much to Dick's relief. He did not wish to come in collision with the six, if it could be avoided, and there was danger, so long as talk was indulged in, that something would be said on one side or the other that would cause a clash.

"That fellow's rather talkative, isn't he?" said Bob to Dick, under cover of the rain.

"Yes; I think he was trying to draw me out and find out how we stand on the question."

"I think that was what he was trying to do. Well," with a chuckle, "he didn't find out much."

"No, not a great deal, that's a fact."

"What are we going to do to-night? We won't dare go to sleep, will we?"

"No; those fellows might go for us while we were asleep. We will have to take turns keeping awake."

"That is the only safe plan."

"Yes; and I'll take the first turn. Tell Mark and Sam, and then the three of you can go to sleep as soon as you like."

"All right."

Bob told his comrades what Dick had said and they

immediately spread out their blankets and lay down, Bob and Dick doing likewise, for Dick, although he would remain awake, did not wish the men at the other end of the room to know it. Presently there came a flash of lightning and the six saw that the four had lain down.

"Hello!" said the man who had done all the talking so far, "goin' ter git sum sleep, hey?"

"Yes, if the rattle of the rain and the thunder will let us," replied Dick.

"Ye've got ther better uv us."

"How is that?"

"We hain't got no blankets."

"Oh!"

"Howsumever, we're used ter hardships, an'll git erlong all right, I guëss. We kin sleep on ther floor, an' et won't be ther furst time, neether."

"Well, we have done such a thing, ourselves," replied Dick; "but I can't say that it was pleasant."

"No, et hain't pleasant, thet's er fack."

The six now lay down, and Dick saw when the next lightning flash came, and he noticed that their heads were close together. He could not hear them talking, as the rain rattled and made a great deal of noise, but he shrewdly suspected that they were engaged in conversation of some sort. He suspected, further, that the conversation was regarding himself and companions.

"It wouldn't do for us all to go to sleep and risk letting them have a chance at us," he said to himself; "they are either Skinners or Cowboys, I am confident, and that means that they are robbers and they would take our weapons and anything we possess that took their fancy; and they would probably take the horses also."

The six rough-looking men were indeed talking of Dick and his companions. "We'll purten' ter go ter sleep," said the leader to the man next to him, "an' then when they hev got good an' soun' ersleep we'll slip over an' make 'em pris'ners afore they kin git erwake, an' then we kin he'p ourselves ter whutever they hev that we kin use."

"Thet's right!" replied the one addressed.

"Pass ther word erlong," the leader said; "tell ther boys they mustn' go ter sleep."

"All right."

Then the fellow told the man next to him, and he told the next, and so on, till all had been told what they were expected to do. When this had been accomplished the men did not converse any more but lay still and listened to the patter of the rain and the rumble and crash of the thunder, and wondered how long it would be before the four stranger youths would be asleep.



They were smart enough not to make any premature move; and they waited more than two hours before doing anything. Indeed, it was nearly three hours from the time Dick and his three comrades had lain down before the six men made a move. Then the leader began rolling over and over, slowly and carefully, and gradually he approached the point where Dick lay. He did not make any noise to speak of—indeed, he would hardly have been heard had there been no disturbing noise to interfere, but with the rain rattling on the roof and the thunder roaring it would have been impossible to hear him had he made three times the noise that he did.

Dick, however, was aware of what was going on. He was watching through his eyelashes and the lightning flashes came often enough so that he could see the progress made by his enemy.

He managed to waken Bob, who woke Mark, who in turn woke Sam, and all four were on the alert. The three last-named drew pistols and cocked them, but Dick did not. He was going to give the man a taste of the iron grip of his sinewy fingers.

Closer and closer came the man, Dick keeping watch of him by the light of the lightning flashes, and the fellow would soon be within reach.

Closer and closer, and at last the man was right beside Dick. The youth feigned sleep, and saw the fellow lift his head and listen to the breathing of the four. Then as the darkness came, succeeding the brilliant light of the lightning, the youth suddenly reached up and grasped the fellow by the throat. Dick had carefully taken note of the position of the fellow's neck, and did not miss his grasp.

There was a gasping gurgle as the fellow tried to utter a cry of alarm and consternation, but only Dick heard it. The five men at the opposite side of the room knew nothing of what had occurred, and as the next flash of lightning was somewhat longer delayed than many of the former ones, the man had been choked into insensibility when the flash came. More, the youths were sitting up, with cocked and leveled pistols in their hands, and this was the startling sight that met the gaze of the five, who uttered exclamations of amazement and consternation.

"Don't try to draw weapons," said Dick; "if you do, or make an attack, we will kill you as we would mad dogs!"

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### A THREE-CORNERED AFFAIR.

To say that the five men were taken aback is stating the case mildly. They were so paralyzed with amazement,

alarm and consternation that they could not move, and although the light from the lightning flash had lasted only an instant, and they could have done so as well as not, they made no move toward drawing weapons. Finally one found his voice, however, and he said, growlingly:

"Whut in blazes hev ye done ter Jim? Ef ye've killed 'im we'll make ye wush't ye hedn't!"

"No threats, please," said Dick, calmly; "your friend Jim isn't dead. I simply choked him till he lost unconsciousness. He will be all right in a few minutes. If I had killed him, however, you could not have said other than that I did right, for he approached me stealthily, and for all I know was intending to kill me."

"No, he wuzn't."

"What did he do it for, then?"

"He wanted to see if ye wuz ersleep."

"Why did he wish to learn that? What difference did it make?"

"Waal, he jes' kinder wanted ter know, thet wuz all, an'——"

"If we had been asleep I suppose you would have set upon us and either killed us or robbed us, eh?"

"No, we wouldn' hev done ennythin' uv ther kin'," was the sullen reply.

"That will do to tell," said Dick, sarcastically; "I have my own opinion in regard to the matter."

"Waal, uv course we kain't he'p whut ye think."

"No, you can't, that's a fact. And now, let me give you a piece of advice: Don't try any more tricks, to-night, for you can't succeed; and I give you my word that the next time we will not hold our hands but will open fire. We are all good shots, and I will wager that by the time we have fired a couple of rounds there won't be any among you who will be in a condition for doing any walking for a while!"

"We don' intend ter try ter do nothin'."

"All right; I am glad to hear that."

The man Dick had choked into insensibility was beginning to stir, now, and he was soon able to sit up. A flash of lightning made it possible for Dick to see him, and for him to see the four youths, and he understood that his plan had been a failure.

"Now, crawl back to your side of the room and stay there!" said Dick, sternly. "Don't venture over here again; for if you do there will be trouble!"

"I—I—won't cum over ter this side uv ther room erg'in," stammered the man, and he hastened to return to where his comrades were seated.

"What were you going to do, anyway?" asked Dick.



"Nuthin'," was the reply, in a sullen tone.

"I am afraid that you are not telling the strict truth," said Dick.

"Yes, I am."

"Yes, he is, Dick!" said Bob, sarcastically. "He is telling the truth—over the left."

"Say, put up them theer pistils, ye fellers," said the leader of the six; "they mought go off, ye know, an' hurt some uv us fellers."

"Yes; and if we put them up you will get out your weapons," said Dick.

"No, we won't."

"We will lay the weapons down close beside us," said the youth; "and then, if you attempt to get your pistols out we will see you and fill you full of holes."

"Ye needn' worry; we don't drawer no pistils."

Dick made up his mind that the fellow spoke the truth, and so he told the boys to lower their weapons. "Keep them handy, though, so that in case those fellows try any tricks we will be able to beat them," he said.

"All right," said Bob; "we'll beat them, you may be sure, if they attempt any tricks."

Just then a noise was heard outside. It sounded like a human voice. The rain had lessened so that there was not so much noise, and the new sound was heard quite plainly.

"What was that?" said Bob.

"It sounded like some one speaking to some one else in a cautious voice," replied Dick.

"You are right—there it is again! There is somebody outside, as sure as you live!"

"This is getting too interesting, altogether," said Dick; "I don't fancy having so many strangers about."

"Neither do I; perhaps they are seeking shelter from the storm the same as we did."

"Perhaps so. We shall soon know, likely."

The six men at the other end of the room had heard the voice, too, and were listening intently in an effort to fathom the meaning of it.

Suddenly there came another flash of lightning and Dick and his comrades saw that the front door was partly open; and in the opening stood a roughly dressed man.

The youths drew up the muzzles of their pistols and covered the fellow, and with a yell he leaped back, slamming the door as he did so. At the same instant the light from the flash disappeared and all was dark again.

"It was one of the two fellows we saw up the road this evening!" said Bob.

"I believe you are right," agreed Dick.

"Yes, that's who it was," said Sam.

"Probably they wished to come in to get out of the storm," said Mark.

"Quite likely," from Dick.

Just then there was a loud rapping on the door and a loud, hoarse voice called out: "Say, ye fellers, in theer!"

"Well, what is it?" asked Dick.

"I wanter ax ye kin we cum in?"

"Why do you wish to come in?"

"Ter git outer ther storm."

"How many of you are there?"

"Two."

"You are sure that's all?"

"Yas."

"Oh, all right; you may come in, then. But you must promise to behave yourselves."

"We'll do thet."

"Come in, then, and see that you do behave."

The youths heard the door open, followed by the trampling of feet on the floor. Then there came a flash of lightning which illumined the interior of the cabin, and the two newcomers saw the six men at the farther end of the room.

The spokesman of the two, and the leader of the six recognized each other, and simultaneous exclamations escaped their lips.

"Jack Grumm!"

"Bill Burke!"

Then the leader of the six made a motion toward drawing a pistol, and the two newcomers, giving vent to a simultaneous yell of fear, turned and leaped toward the door through which they had just come. At the same instant the light of the lightning flash went out and all was darkness.

The scrambling as of men in a hurry was heard and then the door slammed and only the patter of the rain and the rumble of thunder could be heard.

"Waal, blame his hide, et's lucky fur 'im he got outer heer so quick!" said the leader of the six. "I'd er put er bullet through 'im in anuther minnet!"

"Who and what are those two fellows?" asked Dick.

"Er couple uv ther onriest critters this side uv sundown," was the reply; "'speshully thet theer Bill Burke. He's er reg'lar no 'count hoss theef uv er Skinner, he is!"

"Oh, that's who and what they are, eh?" remarked Dick, aloud.

"Yas."

To himself Dick said: "Then you fellows are Cowboys, as I more than half suspected."



Dick remembered that he had heard the names, Jack Grumm and Bill Burke, spoken of as belonging to the leaders of the Skinners and Cowboys of the neutral grounds. He had not supposed there was bad blood between them, as they worked on similar lines, robbing anybody and everybody that they dared rob. Still, Dick knew that two of a trade seldom agreed, and it was only natural, after all, that they should be enemies.

Feeling sure, now, that the six would not attempt to attack them, the "Liberty Boys" composed themselves for sleep, Bob taking the turn of staying awake and keeping a lookout to see that the enemy did not steal a march on them.

Mark and Sam were each awakened in their turn, and kept watch for a like period as Dick and Bob had done. No move was made by the Cowboys, and when the faint light of early dawn crept in under the door the youths got up, rolled up their blankets and stole out of the cabin without awakening the six men, who were slumbering heavily.

The youths mounted their horses and rode away, intending to keep on till they reached a farmhouse, as they were chilly and wished some hot coffee for breakfast.

They had gone but a short distance when they heard the sound of pistol shots from the direction of the cabin, followed by loud yelling.

"What does that mean?" asked Sam.

"I'll tell you what I think it means," said Dick: "Bill Burke has returned to the cabin with reinforcements and has attacked Jack Grumm and his gang."

"That's about it, I'll wager!" said Mark.

"Well, let them fight it out," said Bob; "it's a game of dog eat dog."

"We got away just in time," said Sam.

"Yes," agreed Dick; "if we had been five minutes longer we would have been in the fight."

"Well, it's lucky for Burke and his gang we got away," said Bob, with calm confidence.

The youths rode onward for an hour, and then came to a farmhouse. A man was out in the barnyard, milking, and Dick called to him and asked if they could be accommodated with breakfast.

"Reckon ye kin, ef ye hain't over purtickler whut ye eats," was the reply.

"We are not at all particular. I suppose we can have feed for the horses, also?"

"Oh, yas; theer's plenty of hay an' corn. Bring ther hosses ter ther stable."

The youths rode to the stable, and, dismounting, led the

horses in and gave them feed. Then they emerged and joined the farmer, who had just finished milking.

"Cum right erlong ter ther house," invited the man; "Nancy'll hev breakfas' in er few minnets, though she'll hev ter cook an extry rashun of bacon, an' make sum more coffee."

They entered the house in company with the host, who gave orders for extra food to be cooked for the strangers, and then, seated in the sitting-room, the four waited and conversed with the farmer.

The man was quite a talker, and brought up the subject of Arnold's treason. "I dunno which side ye fellers air on," he said, "but I take et ye air fa'r an' hones' men, an' I don' min' sayin' ez how I think thet hangin' is too good fur thet thar traitor, Arnold!"

"I don't know but you are right about that," said Dick.

"I'm shore I am."

"We agree with you," said Bob.

"I'm glad uv et. Waal, I hope ther patriots'll succeed in gittin' holt uv thet traitor. Ef he kin be ketched and brung back an' hung, et'll be er good thing, fur then et hain't likely thet enny more fellers'd wanter try enny sech game."

"I don't think there is much danger of that, anyway," said Dick; "but I hope Arnold will be caught and taken back and punished as he deserves to be."

"An' so do I. Waal, breakfas' is reddy. Cum erlong an' we kin tork ez we eat."

The youths were hungry and ate heartily of the bread and bacon, and drank the strong coffee with a relish. When they had finished they felt strengthened for the work ahead of them. They offered to pay for their breakfast and the feed for the horses, but the farmer would not hear of it.

"Ef ye wuz redcoats er Tories, er Cowboys, I'd make ye pay," he said; "but I know frum whut ye hev said, an' frum yer looks, thet ye air patriots, an' ye air welcum ter breakfas' an' feed fur yer hosses."

"Thank you very much," said Dick; "you are right, we are patriots."

"I knowed et!"

The youths went to the stable, and bridling and saddling their horses led them forth and mounted.

"Good-by," said Dick; "I hope that you will never be robbed by the Cowboys or Skinners."

"I hope so; waal, good-by, an' good luck ter ye, boys; an' ef ever ye air passin' this way jes' stop an' take er meal, er stay over night with me."

"Thank you; we will do so."

Then the youths rode away. They rode at a moderate



gait all day, stopping at a farmhouse for dinner and at still another for supper, and were so fortunate as to find patriot households each time.

The house where they stopped for supper was within half a mile of the Harlem River, which marks the northern end of Manhattan Island, and after they had eaten and were sitting out on the piazza waiting for darkness to settle over all, Dick told his comrades that he had decided to go down into the city alone, first, on a reconnoitring expedition.

"One person will be less likely to attract attention than four," he said; "and when I have learned where Arnold is I will return and we will lay our plans for making the attempt to capture him."

"Just as you say, Dick," said Bob; "I'd like to go along, but if you think it best to go alone, all right. We'll stay here and will be ready to make the attempt whenever you say so."

"All right, Bob. This will be a good place for us to have our headquarters while engaged upon this work."

"So it will," agreed Bob; "it suits me better than camping in the timber, and judging by the way Sam, here, was making eyes at that pretty girl at the supper-table, I think it will suit him a great deal better."

"Oh, you go 'long!" said Sam, blushing somewhat. "I wasn't making eyes at the girl."

"That's all right; I saw you, Sammy," grinned Bob. "But there isn't any need of flushing up over it. I don't blame you, and if it wasn't for the fact that I have a sweetheart already I'd make eyes at her, myself!"

Esther Longton, the girl in question, who was the daughter of the youths' host, was indeed a beautiful girl, and Sam had gazed at her admiringly; and Bob, who had sharp eyes and saw all that was going on, had noticed it.

Mr. Longton came out onto the piazza, just then, and Dick told him as much as he thought it necessary he should know, and asked if his companions might remain at the farmhouse while he went down into the city on a reconnoitring expedition.

"Certainly they may remain—just as long as they like," was the hearty reply. "I am a strong patriot, and anything that I can do to help the good cause along, will be cheerfully done."

"Thank you," said Dick.

He waited till it was as dark as it would be that night, and then mounting his horse he rode away. The brave "Liberty Boy" was taking great chances in thus venturing into the enemy's lines, but he did not hesitate. He was playing the part of a sleuth-hound, in the interests of the

great cause, and would trail Arnold, the traitor, and capture him, if such a thing was possible.

## CHAPTER V.

### TRAILING ARNOLD.

It was a ride of but a few minutes to the Harlem River and as Dick rode across the bridge and off onto the ground on the Manhattan Island side, he was challenged.

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"A friend," replied Dick.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign."

Dick rode forward. "I don't know any countersign," he said, pausing near where the sentinel stood, the dim outline of his form being faintly visible.

"Oh, you don't know the countersign, eh?"

"No."

"How do I know you are a friend, then?"

"I don't know. I guess you will have to take my word for it."

"Men's words are not worth much these days, young fellow."

"Perhaps not, as a general thing."

"No; their words are not to be relied upon. But who are you, anyway?"

"I am from Samuel Scoville's."

Samuel Scoville was, as Dick had been informed by Mr. Longton, one of the most prominent Tories in that part of the country. He had rendered aid and given information to the British to such an extent that he had earned their good opinion; and to say that one was from Scoville's place was to find oneself passed along without question, the name being as good as the countersign. So Mr. Longton had said, and Dick was making use of the information thus given and would see how it worked.

"Oh, you are from Scoville's?" the sentinel exclaimed more than asked.

"Yes."

"Where are you going?"

"On to the city!"

"What for?"

"For some medicine."

"For some medicine, eh?"

"Yes."

"Who for?"

"For Mr. Scoville."



"Oh, is he sick?"

"Yes."

"Bad?"

"Well, no, not so very bad, I guess."

The sentinel was silent a few moments, and then said:

"All right; you may pass on."

"Thank you," said Dick, and then he rode onward.

An hour and a half later Dick came to a stop at a point a quarter of a mile north of what is now City Hall Park, but which was at that time known as the Common.

He had approached by what was known as the Bowery Lane, and on both sides of the road was a heavy growth of young trees, with considerable underbrush, and this would furnish a good hiding place for the horse.

Dismounting, Dick led the animal back from the road far enough so that a passerby would not be likely to detect its presence, and, tying the horse to a tree, made his way back to the road and walked onward to and across the Common.

He entered Broadway at the point where it intersected the Common, and made his way down the street. As he walked along Dick was debating with himself what should be his course of action. Where should he go first? Where would he be most likely to find Arnold? Where would he be most likely to get on the trail of the traitor?

After some consideration the youth decided to go, first, to the British headquarters. He thought it possible that Arnold would be there. "At any rate," he said to himself, "I may hear something that will be of interest at headquarters."

Dick had been in the city more than once since it had come under the control of the British, and knew the way to headquarters. This being the case he had no difficulty in finding his way there, and twenty minutes later he was standing near the front entrance of the building, watching the doorway eagerly, but in such a manner as not to draw attention to himself.

Redcoats—officers and common soldiers—were going to and coming from headquarters almost constantly, and Dick was in hopes that he might get sight of Arnold and be enabled to track him to his stopping place.

Dick had been standing there perhaps fifteen minutes when he heard the sound of voices and the trampling of feet, and looking up the street he saw a great crowd coming. Several men stopped near Dick and were looking at the approaching crowd, which was tolerably plain to be seen in the light thrown out by the lamps at the street corners.

"What does it mean, I wonder?" remarked Dick, and the man at his left side said:

"I don't know; but I think I'll wait here and see."

"Perhaps the British have made an important capture," said another bystander.

"Maybe it's Arnold coming," suggested a third.

Dick had thought of this, himself, and he hoped it was true. He decided to try to find out if any of the men knew anything about Arnold, and so said: "Arnold! Who is Arnold?"

"Why, the American who turned traitor and came down to New York yesterday," replied one. "Hadn't ye heard about et?"

"No," replied Dick. "So he's a traitor, is he?"

"Yes, a traitor to the Americans, but a friend to the British."

"And you say he came down to New York yesterday?"

"Yes."

"He is staying here at the British headquarters, I suppose?"

"I don't know about that; if this is him coming, though, I should say that he isn't stayin' here. If he was he wouldn't be coming."

"That's so."

"We'll soon know whether it is him, or not."

"Do you know him when you see him?" asked Dick.

"Yes; that is, I saw 'im yesterday, an' I'll know 'im if I see 'im again."

The crowd was close at hand, now, and the attention of all was turned in that direction. Quite a number had paused, and there was a little crowd gathered in the vicinity of Dick, waiting to see what the excitement was about.

As the approaching crowd came nearer, the words of the members could be distinguished, and the name of Arnold was heard, again and again.

Just ahead of the main body came a score of British soldiers. They were marching in the hollow square formation, and in the hollow was a man dressed in citizen's clothes. The man limped as he walked, and he kept turning his head and looking first one way and then another, as if fearing an enemy might appear at any moment. Dick recognized this man as being Benedict Arnold, the traitor, and his heart swelled with indignation as he watched the man who had plotted to strike a death-blow to the cause of Liberty in such a cold-blooded, heartless manner.

"Ah, Benedict Arnold, if I can only get hold of you and get you back to West Point," thought Dick, "you will pay dearly for your dastardly work!"

"That's him—that's Arnold!" cried the man who had



said that he had seen the traitor the day before. "That's him in the hollow square!"

"Arnold! Arnold!" went up, again and again, from the lips of the excited people who were following the soldiers.

Fearing that his face might be seen and recognized by the traitor, who knew him well, Dick kept his face averted while the soldiers were passing.

Arnold was escorted to and into the building occupied by General Clinton as headquarters, and then the crowd stopped; and while a portion of it remained, the men standing around and talking of Arnold, the rest dispersed.

Dick took his place alongside a young fellow and asked him if he knew where Arnold was stopping.

"No," was the reply; "but it must be quite a ways up toward the north end of the city. I came with the crowd only four blocks."

Dick circulated among the members of the crowd and asked quite a number if they knew where Arnold was quartered, but none seemed to know. Presently he gave up the task of trying to find out in this manner, as he feared he might cause suspicion to become centred on him.

"I'll just stay here and wait till he comes out again," said Dick to himself, "and then I will follow him, and in that way can trail him to his stopping place. I have been very lucky as it is, for I hardly expected to get a sight of him."

Dick was glad to see that a goodly number of men remained on hand, held, undoubtedly, by curiosity to see the traitor when he should come forth. This made it easier for the youth to remain on the scene without attracting attention or exciting suspicion.

It was nearly two hours later before Arnold again put in an appearance, and then he emerged, escorted by the body of British soldiers. As before, they took the middle of the street and Arnold walked in the hollow square.

The crowd fell in behind and followed, and Dick was in the front ranks. "I think I am in luck, this time," he said to himself; "I will soon know where he is staying."

Onward the soldiers, with Arnold in their midst, moved, and after them moved the crowd of curiosity seekers. At last the soldiers came to a stop in front of a building, which Arnold entered. Two of the soldiers entered with the traitor, but the rest took their departure, making their way back down the street.

Dick took a careful survey of the building, and noted that it was the last one on that side of the street. There was a vacant lot beyond, to the north, and then beyond that was the Common.

The crowd now dispersed, and not wishing to remain

standing there, Dick made his way onward a little way, but stepped aside and disappeared from sight amid some tall weeds which grew on the vacant lot.

He made his way along till he was even with the rear end of the building in which Arnold was quartered, and then he paused, and, leaning against the fence, took a survey of his surroundings.

"I believe I will reconnoitre a bit," thought Dick; "I can gain a good knowledge of the lay of the land, so I will speak, while I am here to-night, then when the boys come with me we will know just what to do."

Dick stole forward and was soon standing at the rear of the house. He felt his way along—for it was very dark—and presently found what he was searching for, and had hoped he would find—the cellarway.

He opened one of the double doors and made his way cautiously down the short flight of stone steps, lowering the door down over him as he went. On reaching the bottom he felt around till he found the latch of the door which opened into the cellar. He pressed down on the latch and pushed against the door, and, to his surprise, it opened. He had not expected this, but was pleased nevertheless, and felt that his lucky star was in the ascendant.

He did not wish to take any more chances than were necessary, however, and so he stood perfectly still and listened for nearly a minute. He did not hear a sound, and finally made up his mind that he would be safe in going ahead with his work. He had feared that there might be some one in the cellar, but finally decided that the door had been left unbolted by accident.

He stole forward, and, feeling his way, he crossed the cellar. He felt around, and finally located the steps which led up to the first floor.

Dick put in two hours, at least, in making his way through the house. It was a three-story building, and the youth went from cellar to garret and reconnoitred to his heart's content. His work was not without result, either, for he was sure that he had located the rooms occupied by Arnold. They were on the second floor at the front.

Having found out all that he could, and fearing that he might be discovered if he lingered too long, Dick decided to take his departure. He at once made his way down the stairs and then down into the cellar.

He crossed the cellar, going slowly, and feeling his way, and at last reached the door. He lifted the latch and pulled at the door, but it did not come open. The youth was surprised and not a little startled.



"Jove! the door is bolted!" he said to himself. "Somebody has been here and bolted it since I came in. I do wonder if the person knew I had entered?"

Dick stood perfectly still and listened intently for more than a minute.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DICK'S CAPTURE AND ESCAPE.

A few moments' reflection told Dick that there was no probability that the person who had bolted the door suspected his presence. It was probably one of the servants who had bolted the door in the course of his regular work, and thought nothing about the matter.

Dick was strengthened in this view of the case by the fact that he did not hear anything to indicate that there was any one in the cellar, and so he proceeded to unbolt the door. Of course, he was careful to make as little noise as possible, and when he had finished he listened again for nearly a minute; but not having heard any suspicious sound, he then quietly opened the door and stepped out into the cellarway. Closing the cellar door he made his way to the steps, opened the outer door, and was soon in the back yard.

He lost no time in getting away from there as he feared he might be seen, and he had had such good luck so far that he did not wish to have it spoiled at the last moment.

He reached the street, however, and was soon on the Common. He crossed the Common and entered the Bowery Lane and proceeded northward at a rapid pace. He soon reached the point where he had led his horse into the bushes, and, turning aside, he made his way to where the animal was tied.

Scarcely had he reached the spot before he found himself seized by a dozen strong hands. He uttered an exclamation of astonishment and consternation, and began struggling fiercely.

It was no use, however; his assailants outnumbered him at least six to one, and he was powerless. In less than a minute he was a prisoner, with his hands bound together behind his back.

"Now, bring him along, boys," said one, and Dick was hustled along. They crossed Bowery Lane and made their way toward the East River. When they had gone in this direction for a few minutes they came to a stop in front of what Dick was sure was a small shanty. There was a fumbling at the door and then a door creaked and

the youth was pushed through the doorway, and into the room beyond. His captors followed and the door was closed again.

Then Dick heard a peculiar click, click, which he knew was made by the striking of flint against steel, and a few moments later a candle was burning.

Dick took a look at his captors to see what sort of looking fellows they were, and he was surprised to find each and every man had a mask on.

"Who are you fellows?" Dick asked.

There was a chorus of mocking laughter. "Don't you wish you knew?" said one, mockingly.

"Certainly; if I hadn't wanted to know I wouldn't have asked."

"Well, we'll tell you—perhaps," was the reply. "I think it is our place to do the questioning. Who are you?"

"A man."

"Ha! ha! ha!" mockingly. "A man, eh?"

"Yes."

"I'd call you a boy."

"Very well; as you will. It doesn't matter."

"What is your name?" sternly.

"Clinton."

"Clinton?"

"Yes—General Clinton."

There were laughs from some of the masked men and growls of anger from the others.

"Say, you are altogether too smart, young man!" growled the man who had done the talking so far.

"You think so?" coolly.

"Yes, I do!"

"Well, I don't."

"I suppose not; but you are, just the same. And now I want to know who you are."

"Well, I will tell you: I am a hired man, who works for Mr. Scoville, and he lives, as you may know, about a mile and a half north of the Harlem River."

"I know Mr. Scoville, yes; and I know where he lives. You say you work for him?"

"Yes."

"What are you doing in New York at this time of the night, then?"

"I came to the city on business for Mr. Scoville."

"Ah, you did?"

"Yes."

"What was the business?"

"I cannot tell you."

"You mean you will not?"

"Have it that way, if you like."



"Very well; but you must tell us what that business was."

"It was private business of my employer's, and I can't tell."

"All right, if you won't tell we shall be obliged to keep you a prisoner here till morning."

"Then what?"

"Then we will take you before General Clinton."

"Why do that?"

"Because you are a suspicious character."

"I am not."

"You are, or you would answer my questions."

"I would answer if it was my business I was here upon. But it isn't. My employer said very particularly that I was not to say a word to anyone regarding my business."

"Well, you will admit that that has a suspicious look."

"It might have, were it not for the fact that Mr. Scoville is well known to be one of the strongest loyalists in this part of the country."

"I know he claims to be."

"He is."

"We can't be positive of it."

"Well, I should think you would be by this time. He has time and again given the British information regarding the movements of the rebels, and has given aid in many other ways. What more do you want?"

"A man could do all that Mr. Scoville has done, and still be a rebel."

"I can't understand how that could be possible."

"It is quite within the bounds of possibility. He might have done what he has for the British for a blind, and be doing ten times as much for the rebels."

"I am sure you don't believe that."

"I won't say that I believe it; but it is not impossible."

"No, it isn't impossible, of course; but it is highly improbable."

"Then you won't tell what business you have been engaged upon?"

"No."

"All right; we will hold you here a prisoner till morning and will then take you before the commander-in-chief and let him settle with you."

"You are making a mistake in doing so."

"I'll risk it."

Then the leader ordered that Dick's ankles be bound. When this had been done he was lifted and placed on a rude bunk at one side of the room.

"There is no need of tying me up in this fashion," said Dick. "What do you mean, anyway?"

"We don't mean to let you escape."

"I would not try to escape, anyway; that would be useless and foolish."

"We would be foolish to give you any chance."

The leader then spoke to three of the men, and told them to come with him while the other two remained to keep watch over Dick. When the four were gone Dick asked the two who remained behind to loosen the rope binding his arms.

"It is cutting into my flesh, and hurts like everything," he said.

The two looked at each other. "I don't know whether I ought to do it or not," said one. "What do you think?"

"I don't know," was the reply.

"You don't wish to torture a fellow, do you?" asked Dick.

"No, of course we don't want to do that."

"Then loosen the rope sufficient so that it won't hurt me so bad."

The two discussed the matter for a few minutes and finally decided that there could not be much danger in doing as Dick requested. They then loosened the rope binding the prisoner's wrists, and Dick was careful to swell up his wrists all he could and hold them in such a manner that the rope could be worked off in a few minutes.

Dick reckoned that the two men would grow sleepy sooner or later, and that then he might stand a chance of freeing himself from his bonds and making his escape.

The young "Liberty Boy" was a shrewd youth. He knew that so long as he was wide awake the two men would be wide awake also and on their guard; but they thought he was asleep their vigilance would relax and they would themselves become drowsy and would eventually go to sleep.

Acting upon this belief the youth pretended to go to sleep, and half an hour from the time the two had loosened the ropes binding his arms he was to all appearances sound asleep.

It worked as he thought it would. The guards, seeing the prisoner was, as they thought, asleep, relaxed their vigilance. They took a drink out of their canteens, and then another and still another. This stimulated temporarily, and they talked and laughed, and even sang a bit, but presently the effects of the liquor died out and left the two men drowsy and semi-stupefied.

Dick was watching them closely and as soon as he saw the condition they were in he began working at the ropes which bound his wrists. It took him not more than ten minutes to get his wrists free and then he lay still and



waited for the two to go to sleep, as he was sure they would do.

He was right; half an hour later the two were sound asleep. It was Dick's opportunity, and he lost no time in improving it. He quickly untied the rope binding his ankles and stepped out onto the floor. He made his way to the door and just as he reached it he heard the sound of voices.

"The others are coming back!" he said to himself, in dismay. "Jove! am I to be caught and kept from escaping, after all?"

He decided to not let it be this way, if he could help it, and he hastened to blow out the light. In the darkness they would be unable to see that he was not lying on the bunk, a prisoner, and he thought he might be able to make his escape before a knowledge of the situation had been gained.

Having blown out the light, Dick leaped back to the door and was ensconced partially behind it when it came open, pushed back by the newcomers, who were the leader of the party and his three comrades, as Dick had suspected.

"Ho, Dick! Bill!" roared the voice of the leader. "Where are you? What are you sitting in the dark for?"

The two men in question were so sound asleep that they were not awakened by this, but it caused them to stir and mutter.

"Ho, Dick! Bill!" again roared the man. "Where are you? What the deuce has happened? Why are you in the dark? Is the prisoner all right? Answer me!"

Dick could tell by the sound that the men had entered the cabin, and he made up his mind that the time had come for him to make a break for liberty.

He acted instantly and in stepping around the edge of the door bumped against one of the men.

"Hello! what's this? Who are——" the man cried, and was saying when Dick's fist caught him full on the jaw and knocked him against one of his comrades with such force that both went down. Instantly all was confusion.

"Blazes! who hit me?" howled the fellow Dick had struck. "It must have been the prisoner!" he added.

"Out and after him!" roared the leader. "If it is the prisoner he must not be allowed to escape!"

Dick was now out of the cabin and running with all his might. He knew the direction he should take to get to where his horse had been left and he went in that direction. After him came the four men, strung out in single file, the two who had been knocked down being quite a ways behind

the other two, they having got a later start owing to their mishap.

Dick was a fast runner and gradually drew away from his pursuers. He reached Bowery Lane, crossed it and plunged into the timber beyond. As it happened, he had struck the road at just the right point, and a minute later he had reached the place where his horse had been left. The animal was still there, and Dick untied the halter strap and led the horse away, going toward the road, but diagonally, in order to avoid meeting his pursuers.

The men crashed past, within fifty feet of the youth, but it was so dark they could not see him and they were making so much noise themselves that they could not hear him. The result was that Dick reached the road, mounted and was riding away by the time his enemies reached the point where the horse had been.

A chorus of wild yells of anger and disappointment which went up from the point where the horse had been apprised Dick of the fact that the men had reached it and discovered that the animal was missing.

"They know now that I have escaped," thought the youth; "but the knowledge will do them no good. I am mounted and have a good start, and as they have no horses they will be unable to give pursuit."

Dick rode onward at a gallop and could not help congratulating himself on his good fortune in making his escape. "Jove!" he said to himself, "it was a narrow escape! It would have been all up with me if they had managed to hold me and had taken me before General Clinton in the morning. He has seen me and would have recognized me, no doubt, and if he had not Arnold would have done so and I would have been hanged, sure. The traitor would have known I was on his trail and would have been eager to have me put out of the way."

Onward Dick rode, for more than an hour, and at last was in the vicinity of the Harlem River. He was just wondering whether he should attempt to get past the sentinel and cross the bridge, or whether it would be better to turn aside and go up or down the stream and swim his horse across, when he was startled by a command to halt.

"Halt!" cried a fierce voice. "Stop, or you are a dead man!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### BACK AGAIN IN SAFETY.

Of course, Dick stopped. He did not wish to take any chances of being again captured, true; but neither did



he wish to run a chance of getting some bullets put through him.

"Who are you?" he called out.

"Who am I?"

"Yes."

"That doesn't matter. It is for me to ask who you are?"

Dick was doing some rapid thinking. He had an idea the man was a redcoat sentinel and thought he would be able to get past him by using the name of the Tory, Scoville, so he said: "I am in the employ of Mr. Scoville, the loyalist, who lives a mile and a half north of the river. Perhaps you know him?"

"I know of him. And you say you work for him?"

"Yes."

"How happens it, then, that you are coming from the direction of the city?"

"I have been to the city on business for Mr. Scoville."

"Oh, you have?"

"Yes."

"How do I know that is the case?"

"I suppose you will have to take my word for it."

"Men's words are not worth much these times."

"As a general thing, I suppose you are right; but I am telling you the truth."

"Well, I don't see any other thing to do than let you pass."

"That is right."

"Come along."

Dick rode forward and passed within a few yards of where the sentinel stood. "Good night!" the youth said.

"Good night," was the reply.

Then Dick rode onward, but had gone only a short distance when his quick ear caught the sound of hoofbeats behind him.

"Jove! I believe I am pursued, after all!" he thought, and he urged his horse forward into a gallop.

A few moments later he heard the sound of loud voices behind him and knew that the horsemen, whoever they were, had been halted by the sentinel.

"I hope he will detain them for a few minutes," thought Dick; "if he does so I will be able to reach Mr. Longton's and get the horse secreted, and then I will be safe."

Only a few moments had elapsed, however, before the youth heard loud yells, and then the thunder of horses' hoofs on the bridge across the Harlem River, and he knew that the pursuit was on again and hotter than ever, since the pursuers knew exactly where to look for the fugitive—that is to say, they knew he was on the road ahead of them.

It was not far to Mr. Longton's, however, and Dick felt

confident that he could reach there and get out of the way before his pursuers could get close enough to see what he was doing.

And he succeeded. He reached the home of Mr. Longton, turned aside and rode back into the timber in the rear of the stable, and, stopping there, waited for the coming of the pursuers.

"I hope they won't stop here," thought Dick. "I don't want to turn suspicion on Mr. Longton, and if it is learned that he has rendered aid to patriots and harbored them, the British will make things hot for him."

On came the pursuing horsemen, and when they came opposite the house they came to a stop. They talked for a few moments and then Dick heard one say: "No, this isn't the place. Scoville lives a mile farther on. I know where he lives, for I was there one day."

There was some further conversation and then the sound of horses galloping was again heard.

"Thank goodness, they have gone on!" thought Dick.

He waited till he was sure his enemies had gone, and then dismounted and led his horse into the stable and unbridled and unsaddled him. Then the youth made his way to the house and knocked on the door.

"Who is there?" came in the voice of the farmer.

"It is I, Dick Slater," the youth replied.

"All right; I'll let you in in a minnet!"

There was a fumbling noise and then the door opened. "Come in," the man invited; "your comrades'll be glad to see ye safe back again. They grumbled a good deal about ye goin' down inter the city by yourself."

"Where are they?" asked Dick.

"Upstairs; I'll show ye the way as soon as I bar the door."

The man barred the door and then lighted a candle and led the way upstairs to the room occupied by the other "Liberty Boys." It was a large room, with two large double beds in it, and the three youths were sound asleep. They awoke the moment the light of the candle penetrated into the room, however, and rose to a sitting posture to look at the newcomers.

"Hello, it's Dick!" cried Bob, joyously. "Say, I'm glad you got back alive, old man!"

"Good night!" said Mr. Longton, turning to leave.

"Good night," replied Dick; "but, by the way, Mr. Longton, I was pursued by some redcoats and they have gone on to Mr. Scoville's to look for me. I told them I was one of Mr. Scoville's men, you know; and when they find I deceived them, of a certainty, they may come back here."



they knock at the door, pretend to be asleep and don't open the door at all, if you can help it."

"All right, Mr. Slater."

"You say you were pursued, Dick?" cried Bob.

"Yes."

"And they have gone on to Scoville's?"

"Yes; and they will learn, there, that I was a fraud and will likely be back this way before very long."

"Then we had better put the light out."

"Yes; it won't do to let them see a light here when they come back. It would arouse their suspicions and they would not be satisfied till they had looked through the house."

Mr. Longton then went back downstairs and Dick let the candle burn long enough so that his comrades could see to dress themselves and then he extinguished the light.

"What luck did you have down in the city, Dick?" asked Mark Morrison.

"Good luck, Mark."

"Did you learn where Arnold is staying?" asked Bob, eagerly.

"Yes, Bob."

"Did you see him?" asked Sam.

"Yes."

"Jove! I'll wager you had hard work to keep from putting a bullet through him!" exclaimed Bob.

"I did feel a bit like doing something of the kind, Bob, but knew it would not do."

"No, of course not; they would have nabbed you, sure, if you had done anything like that."

"Yes; and, then, Arnold ought to be hanged, anyway. Shooting is too good for him."

"So it is," agreed Bob; "but I'm afraid I should have peppered him if I had been within shooting distance of him!"

"It is lucky you wasn't along, then, Bob," said Dick.

"I guess you are right, Dick. It was lucky for both of us."

"Tell us all about your trip, Dick," said Sam.

"All right, Sam." Then Dick went ahead and told them how he had seen Arnold come down to headquarters under escort, and how he had returned and had been trailed to the house in the northern part of the city. When Dick told how he had entered the house and gone all through it, exclamations of admiration escaped the lips of his hearers.

"Say, you are a good one!" said Sam.

"That was a daring and dangerous thing to do!" said Mark.

"But just what one would expect you to do, old man," said Bob.

"Oh, it wasn't so very dangerous," said Dick, carelessly; "it was worth a great deal more than the danger amounted to, for now we will know what we are about when we go down to try to make a captive of Arnold. I know just how to go, after getting in the house, know where the traitor's rooms are and all about it."

"Yes, that will be a great aid to us," said Bob; "and if it is possible to capture and bring Arnold away we shall be able to do it."

"We will do our best," said Dick; "and then if we fail we will have nothing to reproach ourselves for."

"That's right," said Mark; "when will we make the attempt to capture Arnold?"

"To-morrow night."

"Why not to-night?" asked Bob, who was always eager to get to work.

"Because there are too many of our enemies abroad; we might run into a party and some of us either get captured or killed."

"All right; to-morrow night it is. What if Arnold changes his quarters to-morrow, though?"

"I don't think there is any danger of that happening."

"Perhaps not."

Dick now went to the window and listened intently. "Those fellows are likely to be coming back this way at any time, now," he said.

"Yes, it won't take them long to go a mile and back again," said Sam.

A few minutes later the sound of galloping horses came to the youths' hearing and Dick said: "They're coming!"

All listened, and when the horsemen were about in front of the farmhouse the sound of the hoofbeats suddenly stopped.

"I thought so," said Dick, grimly; "they are going to interview Mr. Longton."

"How many do you suppose there are of them, Dick?" asked Mark.

"I don't think there are more than four."

"Then we have nothing to fear from them."

"Of course not," said Bob; "let's go downstairs and go out and put them to flight, Dick."

"No, no, Bob! You see, we don't want the redcoats to know that Mr. Longton has harbored us. It would be bad for him and would make it impossible for us to use his house for our stopping place."

"Then let's don't go down," said Sam, promptly.

"I thought Sam would say something like that!"



chuckled Bob. "He doesn't want to have to go away from Esther any quicker than is absolutely necessary—and I don't blame him!"

"We don't want the redcoats to learn that we are here, if we can help it," said Dick; "but, of course, if they force an entrance and search the house they will find us and we will have to give them a fight, then."

"There they are at the door!" said Sam, as a loud knocking was heard at the front door.

All listened intently, but heard no move below. Mr. Longton, although awake, was doing as Dick had told him and made no response to the imperious summons.

After a few moments of silence the knocking was repeated and a loud voice called out: "Hello, in there! Hello!"

Even this brought no response, and after waiting a few moments the knocking was again repeated and the voice called out: "Wake up! Wake up! You must be sleeping mighty sound!"

Mr. Longton maintained silence, and it was evident that the men outside were becoming angry and impatient. Again the leader pounded on the door and then he yelled out: "Open the door or we will break it down!"

Mr. Longton now thought it best to take notice of the men, and he went to the door and called out: "Who is there? What do you want?"

"We want you to open the door!"

"Why do ye want me ter open the door?"

"We wish to speak to you."

"You can speak to me as well with the door shut."

"No, no! Open it!"

"I am sorry, sir, but I must refuse."

"Why do you refuse?"

"For the reason that I don't know who you are."

"It doesn't make any difference whether you know or not."

"It makes consider'ble diff'rence ter me."

"I don't see why it should."

"Well, et's plain enuff, I think. How do I know thet you hain't robbers?"

"Robbers?"

"Yes."

"Are there robbers in this part of the country?"

"Yes, lots uv 'em."

"Ah, redcoats, I suppose?"

Doubtless the speaker thought to catch the man un-awares and get him to admit that he was opposed to the British, but Mr. Longton knew the speaker and his companions were redcoats, and so he said:

"Oh, no; the redcoats, ez ye call 'em, hain't never bothered me."

"The Cowboys, then—the fellows who are in sympathy with the British and go around robbing patriot families."

"No, the Cowboys hain't never bothered me, either."

"They haven't?"

"No; but the Skinners hev. I'm afraid that you fellows are Skinners."

"No, we are not."

"Of course, you would say so."

"It's a fact."

"I don' know et."

"That's so; you cannot know that such is the case. Well, answer me a few questions, then."

"Go ahead; I'll do et, if I can."

"Have you anybody stopping with you besides your own family?"

"No, nobuddy."

"Did anyone come here within the past half hour and ask for admittance?"

"No; ef they did I didn' know et, fur I've be'n asleep fur hours, an' didn' 'wake till ye cum an' thumped on my door."

"All right; that'll do, Mr.—what is your name?"

"Longton."

"All right, Mr. Longton. Good night."

"Good night."

Then footsteps were heard as the men walked down the path to the road, and then a few moments later the clatter of horses' hoofs sounded. The redcoats who had pursued Dick had given up the search and were returning to New York.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE "LIBERTY BOYS" AT WORK.

"They are gone," said Dick, in a tone of relief.

"Yes; but I didn't think they would give up so easily," said Mark.

"Neither did I," from Bob; "I supposed we would have to kill the entire crowd."

"Well, the storm has blown over so we might as well get some sleep," said Dick.

The four lay down and were soon asleep. Meanwhile the four redcoats who had pursued Dick were riding back in the direction of New York.



They were disappointed on account of their failure to overtake and recapture the fugitive and did not have much to say. Just after crossing the bridge over the Harlem they were hailed by the sentinel.

"Did you overhaul the rebel?" the sentinel asked.

"No, we didn't," was the sullen reply.

"Do you think he was a rebel, sure enough?"

"I know he was."

"How do you know it?"

"Because we went to Scoville's and asked if they had sent a workman to New York on business, and they said they had not done anything of the kind."

"Oh, ho! that does settle the question, then, sure enough!"

"Yes, he lied about being one of Scoville's workmen, so know he was a rebel."

"It's too bad you were not successful in catching him."

"Yes; well, we had him a prisoner, and Dick and Bill drank too much, like the fools they are, and got so fuddled that they let the fellow fool them into fixing it so he could make his escape, so we are to blame, and I don't bear any grudge against the fellow. He did only what one of us could have done, and I rather admire him for his cleverness."

"Yes, his part of it was all right; but Dick and Bill ought to feel ashamed of themselves for letting him fool them and make his escape."

"I'll make them feel ashamed!" in a threatening voice. "I am going to give them a week in the guardhouse on bread and water, and I think that the next time I set them on guard over a prisoner they will see to it that he doesn't escape."

"It will serve them right."

"I think so; well, good night."

"Good night."

The redcoats rode onward, and an hour and a quarter later reached their cabin near the Common. They looked after their horses' welfare and then entered the cabin, and in lighting the candle found the two worthies, Dick and Bill, lying, snoring, on the floor.

"Oh, you drunken fools!" muttered the leader of the party, giving first one then the other a kick that brought protesting groan from the recipients. "I'll make you pay for your work of to-night!"

He then threw himself down on the bunk, the others rolling themselves in blankets on the floor, and soon all were asleep.

Next morning the two men who had permitted Dick to make his escape were taken down to the guardhouse and

placed therein. "You are to stay in there a week, on bread and water," said their commander; "and you are lucky to get off that easy!"

Dick Slater and his three comrades were in good spirits when they got up next morning. They had made better progress in the business that had brought them to the region than they had expected to make in such a short time.

They ate breakfast with a splendid appetite, and Sam especially was as happy as a lark. He kept his eyes on the pretty face of Esther most all the time, and could hardly find his mouth when eating.

"Be careful or you'll run your fork in your eye, Sam!" said Bob, mischievously; and all save Sam and Esther laughed, for her parents were sensible people, who could enjoy a joke even though it was partially at the expense of their own daughter.

"Don't you fret," retorted Sam; "I've seen you when you were in no better shape than I am."

"That's so, Sam, old man; and I don't deny it," laughed Bob.

The four "Liberty Boys" remained at Mr. Longton's all day, which evidently gave considerable satisfaction to Sam, who seemed to have developed a sudden desire to learn to do kitchen work, so closely did he stick to that part of the house; but perhaps it was to watch some one else do the work that he stayed there.

When at last night came and darkness had settled over all, the youths mounted their horses and rode away toward the south. Before reaching the Harlem River they turned to one side and rode to a point half a mile below the bridge. Here they crossed, by making their horses swim, and riding onward reached the main road again at a point nearly a mile from the river. By doing thus they had avoided having to pass the sentinel who was stationed near the bridge.

The youths advanced cautiously, riding at a moderate pace, and stopping frequently to listen; for they did not wish to encounter any wandering force of redcoats. They were fortunate in this respect, however, for they did not encounter even so much as a single horseman.

When they were near the Common they entered the seraggy timber and tied their horses, being careful to take them to a distance that would make it unlikely that their presence would be detected from the road.

Then they returned to the road, followed it to the Common, crossed the Common and were soon standing amid the weeds growing on the vacant lot adjoining the one on which stood the house in which Arnold was quartered.



Dick led the way and they were soon at the rear of the house. Opening the outside cellar door they descended the steps, and when Dick tried the door opening into the cellar proper he was delighted to find it unfastened.

Pushing it open he entered, the other three following. Then closing the door they stood perfectly still and listened. They could hear no sound to indicate that the house was inhabited, and presently Dick led the way across the cellar and to and up the steps leading to the kitchen.

Before opening the door they paused and listened once more. All was still and Dick made up his mind there was no one in the kitchen. Having so decided he opened the door and they passed through and into the room.

They paused and looked and listened, but it was so dark they could see nothing, and there was not a sound to indicate the presence of any one. "I guess the coast is clear," whispered Dick; "follow me, but step lightly."

He led the way across the room, followed by the three, and opening a door they passed into a hall. They made their way along this hall till they came to a stairway. They were on the point of starting up the stairs when they heard the sound of footsteps and voices, and came to a sudden stop.

"Somebody coming!" said Dick, in a cautious whisper. "Come around here and hide. It is some of the servants, likely, and I expect that it will be as well for us to make prisoners of them so as to make sure that they won't put in an appearance at just the wrong time and spoil our plans."

"All right," the youths replied, in the same, cautious tone of voice.

"When you give the signal we'll jump onto them, Dick," said Bob.

The four youths stepped around and took refuge underneath the sloping stairway. They heard the footsteps and voices coming nearer and nearer and presently they sounded from right above the youths' heads. The parties in question—of whom there seemed to be two—were coming down the stairs. The light from the candle illumined the hall and Dick motioned for his companions to be ready. They nodded to signify that they understood and were ready, and then they waited eagerly for the signal.

Dick peered around the stairway and got sight of the two. They were a man and a boy, and the latter was carrying the candle. Dick watched them closely and the instant they set foot on the floor of the hall he gave the signal, and the four "Liberty Boys" leaped forward.

The backs of the two were toward the youths and the latter were so noiseless in their movements as to not be heard, and the result was that the first the man and boy

knew they were in danger was when they felt the hands of the youths upon them.

They struggled and attempted to cry out, but it availed them nothing, for they were powerless and could not make any noise owing to the fact that they had been seized by the throat and were being choked to such an extent that they could do no more than make a faint, gurgling sound which could not have been heard twenty feet away.

The "Liberty Boys" were old hands at this kind of business, and it did not take them long to choke the two into insensibility. This done they bound the prisoners' arms together behind their backs and placed handkerchiefs in the mouths of the two and tied them there.

"Now we will carry them back upstairs," said Dick, with a cautious look up and down the hall. "We had better hurry as we don't know how soon some more servants may put in an appearance."

The four youths carried the two insensible prisoners up the stairs and along the hall and into a room well toward the front of the building. They were very careful when engaged in this and did not make a bit of noise.

"The next room beyond is one of the suite occupied by Arnold," Dick explained; "and if he is there now he might hear us and get out in a hurry."

The prisoners were placed in chairs, side by side, with their backs to the wall, and were tied there in such fashion that they could not make any noise even after they regained consciousness.

There was a large door at the side of the room next to the one occupied by Arnold, and above this door was a sort of transom, which, on being turned, would leave quite an opening through which it would be possible to look without very good advantage. Dick took note of this, and then, assisted by Bob, a table was placed against the door. Dick mounted, and noting that the glass was stained he turned the transom part way over and peered through. It took but a glance to show that the room was empty. Arnold was not there. A candle burning at one side made every part of the room visible, and there was no one to be seen.

Dick got down off the table, a disappointed look on his face.

"Isn't he there?" asked Bob, in a whisper.

Dick shook his head. "No, he's not there, Bob. There is no one in the room at all."

"Where can he be?"

"I have an idea he is down to the headquarters."

"Ah! Conferring with General Clinton, eh?"

"Yes; giving him all the information he can."

"The scoundrelly traitor!"



Bob's hands were clenched, and there was a fierce look on his face.

"What will we do now, Dick?" asked Mark.

"Wait till he comes back."

"And then grab him, eh?"

"Yes."

"That's the talk!" said Bob. "We are not going to give up now!"

"Not a bit of it!" said Dick. "He will certainly be home before very long and then we will nab him, if such a thing is possible."

"Jove! I hope that we will be successful!" said Sam.

"It will be a big thing if we do succeed in getting hold of the traitor and taking him back."

"You are right, Sam; it will be a big thing," agreed Dick. "And I only hope that we will be successful."

The prisoners regained consciousness presently and stared at their captors in a wondering manner. Doubtless they wondered who the handsome, bronzed youths were, but they were gagged they could not ask any questions.

The "Liberty Boys" waited as patiently as they could for more than an hour, and what talking they indulged in was carried on in whispers, so the man and boy could not hear what was said.

At last noises were heard downstairs. There was the sound of opening and shutting of doors, followed by footsteps, and the trampling of feet grew louder and louder, which would seem to indicate that the newcomers, whoever they were, were coming up the stairs. Presently the trampling sounded in the hall just outside the room the youths were in and they looked at one another, questioningly, and seemed to be a bit startled. There was good reason for this, for, judging by the footsteps, there was a score of men outside.

"Look out of the window and see if you can see an unusual number of men in the street," said Dick, in a whisper, and Bob obeyed. Then Dick climbed up on the table and got in readiness to view the newcomers.

There was the sound of a door being opened and of footsteps in the room Dick had said was occupied by Arnold. Dick stood on the table and peered through the opening before the door, while the other three youths kept watch out the window and guard over the prisoners.

Dick saw Arnold enter the room and behind him came half a dozen British soldiers. The traitor had a peculiar half smile on his face, and the youth became suspicious at once. He had seen that look on Arnold's face before, and always boded ill for somebody.

Arnold advanced straight toward the door, and fearing

he might be seen he stooped down and then got down off the table. As he did so there came a knock on the door.

"Hello, in there!" called out a voice which Dick recognized as being that of Arnold; "we know you are there, and how many there are of you, and you might as well unlock the door and surrender gracefully, for we have a score of men here, and you cannot possibly escape!"

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE "LIBERTY BOYS" IN DANGER.

There had, unknown to Dick and his comrades, been a witness to their capture of the man and boy in the lower hall. The person who had seen them was a woman, and no other than the wife of the man, and mother of the boy. From the doorway of the room occupied by herself and husband, well down toward the end of the hall, she had witnessed the affair, and being a rather strong-minded woman she had not shrieked and warned the youths that they had been seen. On the contrary, knowing she could do nothing at that moment to aid her husband and son, she kept silent and watched eagerly and somewhat anxiously to see what would be done by the intruders.

"Who can they be?" she asked herself. "And why have they entered the house in this fashion and made prisoners of John and Sammy?"

Her question could not be answered, of course, and so she kept on watching, in the belief that she would thus learn what she wished to know.

The watcher saw the stranger youths tie and gag her son and husband and carry them upstairs, and she followed at a safe distance and saw the little party disappear into the room adjoining the one occupied by Arnold.

She stole forward and was close enough to hear the key turn in the lock. "They've locked the door," she said to herself. "Now what does it mean? Why have they done this? Why have they entered that room?"

The woman advanced cautiously and placed her ear to the keyhole and listened, but the youths did not speak above a whisper, and she could not learn anything. Fearing that the door might be opened and she be discovered, she presently withdrew and went back downstairs, where she spent perhaps five minutes in pondering over the strange affair.

"Do they intend to injure my husband and son?" she asked herself. After due deliberation she decided that the



prisoners were in no danger of being killed. "Those strangers have some deep purpose in doing what they have done," she decided, and then of a sudden the thought came to her that the presence of the four stranger youths meant danger to the man who occupied the large front room. She knew who the man was. She knew that the occupant of the front room was Benedict Arnold, the ex-patriot, the man who had been a traitor to the patriot cause, but as she was a strong loyalist she was friendly to Arnold and was unwilling that harm should come to him.

"And I think that harm threatens him now!" she said to herself. "I think that those four strangers are here for the purpose of killing Arnold. Yes, that is it! I am sure of it. And I must do something to prevent the crime from being committed. Ah! how fortunate that Arnold was called down to headquarters an hour ago! But when he returns—ah, when he returns those terrible strangers who have made prisoners of John and Sammy will kill him! I must prevent it—but how?"

It will be seen that the woman was far from being a fool. She was indeed a more than ordinarily shrewd woman for one in her station, and she presently hit upon the very thing of all things that was the right one to be done under the circumstances, if Arnold really was threatened and was to be saved. She hit upon the plan of sending word to headquarters that the four strangers were in the room upstairs, waiting for the return of Arnold. But who could she send? She must find some one; and with this purpose before her she made her way to the front door, and, opening it very carefully, so as to make no noise and apprise the stranger youths upstairs of the fact that there were others in the house besides their two prisoners and themselves, she stepped out of doors. She waited a few minutes and then a British soldier came along and she hailed him, cautiously, and told him to come up onto the stoop.

"What do you want?" the soldier asked as he reached the woman's side.

"I want you to take a message to headquarters."

"A message to headquarters?"

"Yes."

"Who to—General Clinton?"

"To him or to General Arnold, either one."

"Is Arnold there now?"

"Yes. This is where he is staying, though."

"So I thought."

"And he is in danger!"

"In danger—Arnold?"

"Yes."

"Who from?"

"I don't know who they are, but I think they are rebels."

"Where are they?"

"In the house."

The soldier started. "In this house?" he asked.

"Yes."

"How many are there of them?"

"Four."

"Four?"

"Yes; and they have made prisoners of my husband John, and son, Sammy, and have taken up their station in the room next to the one occupied by Arnold; and I am sure there is great danger threatening him."

"Undoubtedly you are right, my good woman. And I wish me to take this information to Clinton or Arnold at headquarters?"

"Yes, yes!"

"All right; I'll do it."

"Oh, thank you!"

"I'll go at once and will hurry as fast as ever I can."

"Very well; though I am sure the four rebels will leave until after Arnold has come, anyway."

"Likely not; and I don't think they will leave even then—except as prisoners."

"I hope not."

The soldier hastened away, while the woman re-entered the house and closed the door.

The soldier, full of the importance of his mission, hastened down the street at a rapid pace, and it did not take him so very long to reach headquarters.

He hastened into the building and requested an order to tell General Clinton that a messenger was at hand and that his message was one of great importance.

The orderly entered the room where General Clinton and the traitor, Arnold, sat, talking confidentially together and delivered the message.

"A messenger! And one with a message of importance, you say?" remarked General Clinton. "Jove! perchance it is something regarding Andre! Show him in at once!"

The orderly bowed and withdrew, returning soon, accompanied by the soldier.

"What is it, my man? Give me the message instantly!" cried General Clinton, eagerly, the instant the orderly came out of the room.

"I bring information to the effect that there is a plot on foot to assassinate General Arnold!" the soldier said impressively.

"A plot to kill General Arnold?" the commander-in-chief of the British army cried. "How know you this?"



"I have just come from the house where General Arnold was stopping."

"And what of that? What did you learn or see there?"

"I saw the housekeeper, as I took her to be, and she told me and told me that her husband and son had been made prisoners by four strangers, and that the four strangers, whom she believes to be rebels, have taken up their station in the room adjoining that of General Arnold's, and are evidently intending to wait till he returns, when they will shoot him down!"

The British general and the traitor were somewhat excited by this information, and stared at each other in wonder and amazement.

"What do you think of the matter, General Arnold?" asked the British commander-in-chief.

"It looks as if the woman's fears are well founded," was the reply. "I have no doubt that the four men who are in the room awaiting my return are my fellow-countrymen, and that they have come to try to capture me."

"To capture you?"

"Yes."

"To assassinate you, you mean."

"No, to capture me. I would wager that is their plan."

"Do you think they would be so foolish as to think they could capture you and take you away and back to the rebel army?"

Arnold nodded. "There are plenty of men ready to make such an attempt," he said quietly. "It is just like them."

"They would be fools to think of such a thing."

"I don't know; a bold plan often wins where a less bold one would fail."

"That is true, too."

"Yes; I don't think my life is in immediate danger, but they could have made a success of their undertaking if they could have gone hard with me."

General Clinton laughed, drily, "I judge that you are right about that," he said.

"There is no doubt about it."

"Well, what are your wishes regarding this, General Arnold? I will turn the matter over for you to handle as you see fit."

"My idea is that it will be a good plan to take a score or so of men and go up to my stopping place and make prisoners of the four men in question."

"That is a good plan; it will be turning the tables on them in splendid style."

"Yes, so it will."

"Then you had better go at once, as they might grow tired of waiting for you and go away."

"Yes; or become suspicious."

No time was lost. A score of men were selected, and under command of Arnold they set out. They reached the building and entered it.

"Are they still here?" asked Arnold of the housekeeper.

"Yes," she replied; "they haven't stirred out of the room, I know, for I have kept watch on it all the time."

"Good! Then we will soon have them in our power."

Arnold and his men made their way upstairs, and while the major portion of the force paused at the door leading into the room in which Dick and his comrades were, Arnold and four or five entered his room.

Then it was that Arnold walked up to the connecting door and knocked and called upon the youths to surrender.

But Dick Slater and his comrades were not the fellows to surrender as long as there was the least chance of escaping. Although it would seem as if there was no possible chance for them to escape, they were not at all sure that this was the case. They had been in a great many tight places in their time and still lived to tell it.

"I couldn't think of surrendering, Arnold!" replied Dick, promptly. And as the traitor heard the youth's voice an exclamation escaped him.

"Dick Slater!" he cried.

"At your service," the youth remarked.

"Well, Dick, this adventure will be your last!"

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it. There is no possible chance for you to escape."

"Oh, I am not so sure about that as you seem to be."

"Bah! Don't talk foolishness, Dick!"

"I am not doing so."

"Oh, yes, you are. Open the door at once!"

"You will have to excuse me."

"Open it, I say!"

"I couldn't think of it."

"Don't be a fool!"

"I would be a fool if I were to open the door."

"No, you would be acting sensibly."

"I don't see it that way."

"I do. Open the door or we will break it down."

"You will do nothing of the kind."

"What?"

"I say you will not break the door down."

"Why won't we?"

"Because if you do we will kill the man and boy we have prisoners in here!"



Arnold had forgotten that the youths had prisoners in their hands.

"You wouldn't dare do that!" he said.

"You think not?"

"I am sure of it."

"Then just break the door down and see!"

"But that would be the height of folly. It would doom you to certain death."

"Death would be certain, anyway, if we fell into your hands."

"Perhaps not."

Dick laughed, ironically. "You can't hoodwink me, Arnold," he said; "we will never surrender. We will die fighting, and will kill the two prisoners and as many of your gang as we possibly can before you will be able to make way with us."

"But to resist will be very foolish of you, Dick," protested Arnold; "there is no certainty that you will be killed if we get hold of you. In fact, I am confident that General Clinton would exchange you for Major Andre."

"We wouldn't surrender if we knew Clinton would do that," was Dick's reply; "Andre is big game, and he must die. We will die before we will do anything toward helping him to escape the fate which he merits."

"I thought you were more sensible than that, Dick."

"I'm sensible enough; I know what I am doing."

"So do I; you are dooming yourselves and companions to sure death."

"And incidentally a dozen of your men as well, for I am confident we can kill that number, at least, before you can overcome us."

"Then you refuse to surrender?"

"Absolutely!"

"All right; your blood be upon your own head, then!"

"Don't worry about that part of it, Arnold!"

## CHAPTER X.

### THE "LIBERTY BOYS" ESCAPE.

While Dick was talking to Arnold the other three youths had not been idle. Dick had signaled them and they had been very busy trying to figure out some way of escaping from the trap in which they found themselves.

It had not taken them long to learn that the only possible chance of escape lay through the window. As they were in the second story it would not do to jump;

they would be sure to be killed or badly crippled. If they could manage to get part way down, however, they could with a reasonable degree of safety, jump the rest of the way and they looked around for something that could be utilized as a means to this end.

The room in which they were was a bedroom, and in one corner was a bed. The youths quickly stripped the bed of sheets and coverlids, and these they tied together until they had a rude but strong rope which would run at least half way to the ground. They tied the end to the bedstead, which had been placed close to the window, and by the time Dick finished talking to Arnold all was ready for the attempt at escaping.

Dick signaled his companions to make their escape, and he remained behind, ready to say something that would put a stop to work on the part of the redcoats for a few moments, at least, in case they started in to break the door down.

One after the other the three went and then Dick climbed over to the window and climbed through. Just as he started to slide down the rude rope there came a loud crash and the door leading into the room from the hall burst open and the redcoats came rushing in.

They were just in time to catch sight of Dick's head as it disappeared, and they rushed across the room with loud yells of rage.

Dick knew he had no time to spare, and he slid downward with great rapidity, and scarcely pausing an instant at the end of the rope, dropped. He struck on his feet and was jarred considerable; but such little things as that did not count, when lives were in danger.

"Come, boys!" he cried. "They'll be shooting down at us in a moment!"

They started and ran across the vacant lot, the crack! crack! of pistol shots coming to their ears, and the zip—spat! of bullets that came closer than was pleasant.

Fortunately neither of the youths were wounded, however, and all kept on running at the top of their speed.

"We must get as good a lead as possible," said Dick, "for they will give chase and it will be a hard race."

Onward the youths dashed, and in an incredibly short space of time the redcoats were out of the building and coming after them. It was fortunate for the four "Liberty Boys" that the Common was ahead of them instead of the four blocks of city streets. There were no redcoats to get in their way, and there was nothing to bar their progress; and they were thus enabled to reach the Bow Lane and make their way along it to the point where they had turned into the timber to secrete their horses.



They turned aside and found their horses safe; and mounting as soon as they had led the animals out to the yard they rode away at a gallop, leaving the yelling red-ats behind.

Arnold was angry and disappointed when he found that Dick and his comrades had succeeded in escaping from the room where he had supposed they were, like rats in a trap. He yelled and even cursed and urged the men to hasten in pursuit.

"Capture them!" he cried. "Capture them if possible! One of them is Dick Slater, the famous scout and spy, and I think that Washington would give up Andre rather than permit us to hang the young rascal. Capture them, if possible!"

The men hastened to get out of the building and follow the fleeing youths; but, as we have seen, were unable to catch them. As soon as they learned that the fugitives had escaped and had got away, they turned back and reported to Arnold.

"Too bad!" the traitor said. "If we could have captured them we could have saved Andre. Too bad!"

"They may run afoul of some of our boys and be captured yet," said one of the men, but Arnold shook his head.

"Not much chance of that," he said; "I know Dick Slater of old. He is one of the shrewdest fellows I ever saw, and it would take a small army to capture him now."

"Shall we get horses and go in pursuit?"

Arnold shook his head. "It would be useless," he said. "No, we may as well go back down to headquarters and report our failure to the commander-in-chief."

"Very well, sir; just as you say."

"Wait a few moments; I wish to speak to the man who has care of the building. I must learn how those fellows managed to get into the house."

Arnold questioned the housekeeper's husband, John, who had been set free—the boy, Sammy, also—by the redecoats, and the man, who had been looking around, told him that the "rebels" had entered by way of the cellar.

"Well, see to it that the door is kept fastened from now on, John," said Arnold.

"I will do so, sir," was the reply; "I am not eager for any other such experience as I have had to-night, sir."

"I shouldn't think you would be."

"No, indeed; and there will be no more rebels get into this building unbeknown to me, sir."

Arnold and the soldiers returned to headquarters and the traitor re-entered the private room of the commander-in-chief.

"What luck? Did you capture the rebels?" asked General Clinton, eagerly, when Arnold had taken a seat.

Arnold shook his head. "No, they escaped," was the reply.

"That is too bad! I thought that you would be sure to capture them."

"We would have been able to capture them had they been any other persons than who they were."

"How is that? Who were they?"

"Dick Slater and three of the 'Liberty Boys.'"

"What! Dick Slater, you say?"

"Yes."

"Jove! it would have been a great haul if you had succeeded in capturing them, wouldn't it?"

"Yes; I believe that Washington would almost have exchanged Andre for Dick Slater."

"I judge that he does think a great deal of that young fellow."

"He does, indeed; as I happen to know."

"Well, it is useless to think of that matter, now. They have escaped, and the chance has slipped through our fingers; but how did it happen? I don't see how even Dick Slater managed to escape."

"Oh, he will find a way if there is half a chance for him to do so."

Then Arnold told all about the affair, and when Clinton expressed the hope that the fugitives might encounter a party of the British soldiers and be captured, the traitor shook his head.

"No such good luck is in store for us," he said; "they will make their escape."

And Arnold was right. The youths rode northward as rapidly as they could, and managed to dodge the sentinel at the north end of the island by turning aside and swimming the stream a quarter of a mile farther down.

Then they rode onward, and twenty minutes later were at the home of Mr. Longton.

"Do you think it will be safe to stay here over night?" asked Bob.

"I think so," replied Dick. "I don't think we were pursued at all by horsemen, and we are as safe here as we were before."

"Then we will stay here to-night?"

"Yes; for it is very dark and we would be liable to lose our way in the darkness and lose more time than by waiting till morning."

This was satisfactory to all four and especially satisfactory to Sam, who did not want to return to West Point



Without having seen Esther once more. Sam was very much in love, and so was Esther.

They stayed there till morning, and got a good rest, and when they told the members of the family next morning how they had failed, they were the recipients of a great deal of sympathy from the patriots.

"It is too bad thet ye failed," said Mr. Longton. "Arnold deserves ter be hung, if ever a man did; an' I was in hopes ye would succeed in capturing him an' 'takin' him back ter West Point with ye."

"We hoped to be able to do so," said Dick, "but failed; and I fear, now, that it would be suicide to attempt it again."

"Yes, they will take care thet ye don't get another chance at him."

"Yes, they will keep a strong guard around the building he is in from now on, doubtless, and it would be folly to try to get at him."

After breakfast the youths got ready to start, but it was found that Sam was missing. Then it was noticed that Esther was nowhere to be seen.

"Sam! Oh, Sam!" called Bob, with a grin. "I think I could guess where he is," he added, in a lower tone.

"Where?" asked Dick.

"In the kitchen with Esther. He said he had to have a drink, and I guess Esther was thirsty, too, for they both went in there."

"I guess that you will lose your daughter one of these days, Mr. and Mrs. Longton," said Dick, with a smile. "Well, Sam is as fine a fellow as ever lived."

It was as Bob had said. Sam and Esther were in the kitchen, and there, in as few words as possible, Sam told the beautiful girl that he loved her, and that if she would promise to be his wife he would come for her as soon as the war was ended. And Esther? She gave the promise and the youth sealed it with a dozen kisses. Then Bob's voice was heard calling, and he said: "I must go. Good-by, little sweetheart, and don't forget me!"

"No fear of that, Sam!" murmured the girl, and, then exchanging kisses, they emerged from the house looking wonderfully happy, as was patent to all the observers.

"Oh, say, doesn't Sam look happy, though!" cried the irrepressible Bob, and all had to laugh.

"Sam is happy, too, old man!" the youth said, bravely. "But you needn't say anything, Bob; I've seen you looking that way more than once, when we have been at Mrs. Slater's house."

"That's right, I guess you have!" grinned Bob.

Then the good-bys were spoken and with a wave of their hands the youths rode away.

By riding hard they reached the home of Beverly Robinson that night at ten o'clock. General Washington over at West Point, Mr. Robinson said, and as there was no boat on the side of the river where they were the youths were forced to remain at the house over night.

Next morning, just after they had finished eating breakfast a boat was seen putting off from the opposite bank of the river, and a few minutes later Generals Washington and Greene arrived at the Robinson house.

"And you could not capture Arnold, Dick?" remarked the commander-in-chief, after he had greeted the youths.

"No, your excellency."

"You succeeded in getting down into the city, did you?"

"Yes, sir; and into the house occupied by Arnold."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir; but Arnold was not there at the time. I was down to headquarters, conferring, as I suppose, with General Clinton."

"Without doubt." There was a sad cadence in the general's tone.

"I suppose you were forced to leave the building before Arnold returned?" asked Greene.

"No," replied Dick; "we were there when he came back—but he brought a score of soldiers along with him."

"Ah! he had learned of your presence in the building in some manner!" exclaimed Washington.

"Yes; we made a prisoner of the housekeeper's husband and his son, a boy of twelve or thereabouts, but we saw nothing of the woman, and failed to take her into consideration. The result was that she saw us, sent word down to headquarters and Arnold came to the house, bringing a score of men along, and we escaped only by a very narrow margin, indeed."

"The wonder is that you escaped at all. Did you see Arnold?"

"Both."

"Ah! And he expressed no regret for what he had done?"

"None whatever."

"Too bad! too bad! I had thought that he would long ere this have repented, and that he would at least have shown manhood to express sorrow at having acted in such a way."

"No; his entire talk was in regard to having us surrender. He seemed to think that if he could capture us you would be willing to exchange Andre for us."

The youth went ahead, then, and told the story of their escape.



“You had a narrow escape, indeed,” the great man remarked; “well, I am glad you escaped and sorry that you were unable to bring Arnold back with you.”

“So am I, your excellency.”

“To tell the truth, Dick, you came nearer to effecting the capture of Arnold than I expected you would be able to do.

There was a chance, a bare chance, that you might succeed, and I was willing to send you; but I did not really expect that you could make a success of such a difficult undertaking.”

“Well, we did the best we could, your excellency; and we would have been very happy had we been enabled to capture Arnold and bring him back.”

“It would have been very pleasing to me also, as I should like to show the world how such traitors should be dealt with!” There was a stern ring to the great man’s voice, which showed that it would have fared illy with Arnold had he been brought back.

General Washington, and Green also then complimented Dick on what he and his comrades had accomplished. “You failed in the task of bringing the traitor back,” said the commander-in-chief, “but you did your work well and gave him a good scare, at any rate.”

“I hope that sooner or later we shall be able to lay hands on him,” said Dick.

But they never did. Arnold managed to keep from falling into the hands of the patriots, and when the war ended he went to England, where he was joined by his wife and child. He lived in England many years, but his life was not a happy one, the finger of scorn being pointed at him by many even in England—by the very people whom he had served by committing one of the worst crimes known to mankind.

THE END.

The next number (74) of “The Liberty Boys of ’76” will contain “THE LIBERTY BOYS’ “SWOOP”; OR, SCATTERING THE REDCOATS LIKE CHAFF,” by Harry Moore.

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